

Conservation Notes

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WINTER 2014

Thanks for the Memories

By Lynn Porter, District Administrator

It's hard to believe I'm writing my final article after 30 years. I remember Larry Golden telling me about the job with the district and then saying "There's one more thing...a monthly newsletter." I remember the panic I felt – I was not a journalism major! The title of this article is "Thanks for the Memories." I love old movies and especially the "Road" series with Bob Hope and Bing Crosby. Bob Hope's signature song was "Thanks for the Memory" – so the title to my article.

I have been blessed to be able to enjoy my job, most of the time. As my dad said, "If you enjoyed your job every day, it would be a hobby and not a job." As I reflect back, it's been a great ride. Mentioning rides, when I started, the only transportation the office had was government trucks, no cars or vans, and the trucks didn't have radios or an air conditioner. It's not that I am that dated, but at that time the government would purchase "stripped" trucks. When they could no longer order trucks without air or manual roll up windows, the "new standard" features of electric windows and air conditioning were great on hot dusty days out in the fields. When I started with the district, I was trying to balance field work along with educational programs. I remember laying out "Conservation Notes" column by column, waxing the backside and laying the columns on graph paper as well as trying to figure the percentages that black and white pictures had to be reduced or enlarged to fit the layout sheets. I have been honored when "Conservation Notes" was recognized with numerous awards – credit also has to go to the board



supporting a decision when Dale Bullock and I wanted to give the newsletter an updated look. As with many of you, there were no computers for at least the first half of my career. No wonder I have so many folders I'm cleaning out, now it only takes "Google" to find the information that I have stored in several filing cabinets.

Thank you Jack Winstead for having confidence in this little girl who just graduated from Mississippi State University and Jeannine May who during a softball tournament (she pitched and I played shortstop for our church softball team) I asked "Do you know any jobs in agriculture?" My first week on the job was assisting with the 1984 H.O.T. (Hold Our Topsoil) Field Day at Mr. Robert Mashburn's farm; what a huge event to start your career with. I am honored to

say that I was involved with the planning of the first Conservation Carnival in 1985. During the first Conservation Carnival, severe thunderstorms hit and we had young students crying underneath trees, chickens literally floating and trucks stuck in the mud. Larry Golden gathered us around about 7:00 p.m. All of us were soaked and exhausted, but he asked if we wanted to try it again...the rest is history as they say. For several years after that first field day, we were having over 3,000 students for a WEEK long event. The Conservation Carnival won national publicity and still serves as the spring board for present natural resource field days. I was fortunate to work with some outstanding District Conservationists throughout my career. Dale Bullock was also VERY supportive of all district events and helped to expand and improve many activities from Annual Meetings to Tree Planting Week. I remember I was out on maternity leave and Jo Patrick was out with a death in the family so Dale, Jerry and Roy had to change the Annual Meeting venue several times after a tornado came through Raymond and took the lights out

See "MEMORIES" on page 2

Tree Day

Saturday, February 7, 2015

8:00 a.m. until Noon

****Pine Trees will cost \$1.00 per pack (approximately 25 seedlings)
Trees \$1.00 each or 8 for \$5.00 (Limit 16 trees per person)
(Hardwoods, flowering, wildlife and a limited number of fruit)**



Conservation Notes

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There is no way I could retire without seeing this "famous" picture in print one more time. Hidden under those clown faces are many long time district and SCS employees.

MEMORIES

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at McKenzie Arena. Rogerick Thompson balanced the new Farm Bill programs while supporting the district's educational programs. Murray came to our office as a Soil Conservationist years ago, and now the district is honored to have him back as DC. I remember the day before Thanksgiving, Jeannine and I were out in the field conducting some water quality studies for the newly introduced "Adopt A Stream" program and got the truck stuck. It was Murray who came looking for us making sure we were okay before he left for the Thanksgiving holiday. I'm probably one of the few individuals who can say that I had co-workers, district conservationists and board members who believed in God, family then job throughout my career...THANKS TO EACH OF YOU.

I will never forget Valentine's Day, February 14, 1989 when, on my way to do an Arbor Day program, I was involved in saving Mr. Leonard Moran's life on McDowell Road – another way God worked in my life. The incident was recreated on the TV show Rescue 911. Thanks to Jack Winstead and Becky McNair, I was nominated for one of USDA's top awards. Ed and I flew to Washington to receive the award; our first time in our nation's capitol...I will never forget it.

The Sammy Soil costume that Jeannine and I designed is going nationwide to reach thousands of students. I am humbled and grateful. The coloring and activity

books that I was privileged to work on are in the hands of thousands of students.

When I look at the mature trees on the campus of MS School for the Blind, I am flooded with memories about the large tree planting event we had with the students on that special day.

I was honored to serve on the Wildflower State Committee with former first lady Pat Fordice. She handled herself as a true southern lady but was able to get the job done convincing some "tough" individuals not to mow so Mississippi's native yellow wildflowers would be blooming around the state when the Palaces of Versailles exhibit came to Jackson.

The Project Earth Workshops that Laura Beiser, Jeannine May and I started back in the early 90's were conducted statewide. After teachers contacting me about needing workshops locally, a beautiful partnership between Hinds and Madison Counties begun that is still successful today. Thanks to the Department of Environmental Quality for all of your support.

I had the honor and privilege of being in the first facilitator workshops for Project Learning Tree, Project WILD, Project WET and Aquatic WILD as well as Adopt a Stream. I also had the privilege of being a curriculum writer for the curriculum Food, Land and People. Thank you Farm Bureau

See "MEMORIES" on page 4

Adios, Au Revoir, Auf Wiedersehen (Goodbye Until We Meet Again)

By Murray Fulton, District Conservationist

Well it's a black day at the Hinds County Field Office!! We've just recently found out the Ms. Lynn Porter will be reporting for her last day of duty on Friday December 12, 2014 and I reckon we've all shed a selfish tear upon hearing that news.

Lynn has been a friend of conservation and a partner to the conservation effort in Hinds County and the great State of Mississippi. Many people don't know that Lynn is an author/co-author of lesson plans that have been published and used by countless teachers across the country to teach children about conserving our natural resources. A lot of folks don't know that Lynn helped develop the character "Sammy Soil". Yes, from the very early stages of designing the "Wooly" dirt clod's costume to the newest version of Sammy's costume that illustrates the many wonders of the soil to school kids, Lynn Porter has been instrumental in developing that conservation icon.

Lynn has not only been a friend to conservation but a friend and confidant to me and to all her co-workers and conservation partners. You may say, "Who are these other partners"? Well there's the local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, NRCS and Earth Team Volunteers, Department of Environmental Quality, Mississippi Department of Wildlife Fisheries and Parks and Jackson Public Schools just to name a few.

What a friend we've had in Jesus for Him allowing Lynn to be a part of all of our lives for thirty some odd years. And yes, "Precious memories; How they linger; How they ever flood my soul; In the stillness of the midnight; Precious sacred scenes unfold; As I travel on life's pathway; Know not what the years may hold; As I ponder hope grows fonder; Precious memories flood my soul".

I could say a lot more but I'll save it for December 18, 2014. We plan to have a time to honor Lynn at Eagle Ridge in Raymond, Mississippi from 2 PM until 4 PM on that day. More information will be coming out soon if you would like to join us in celebrating Lynn's retirement. If you would like to contribute with us in providing a gift for Lynn just call the Hinds County Field Office and we'll give you that information as well.

From me to you, Miss Lynn, "It's been quite a party and we'll surely miss you but we wish the very best to you in the days ahead. God bless you and your family." Murray

Tillage Radishes National Leader visits Canaan Plantation (Barton Farms)



This is Mr. Barton's second year to plant tillage radishes. This species of radishes improves the soil by breaking up the soil pan to allow air and water seep in, pull up nutrients to the top, improve soil tilth, and other benefits.



Dr. Michael Robotham, National Leader, Technical Soil Services, third from right, visited Canaan Plantation to see first hand the conservation use of tillage radishes. Others interested in the technical benefits of the new cropping system include: (left to right) James Curtis, NRCS, Walter Jackson, NRCS, Dr. Robotham, Delaney Johnson, NRCS, Mr. Barton, Willie Taylor, NRCS Phillip Mikell, District and Brad Mitchell, NRCS.



Look closely in the above picture- radishes along with wheat are emerging among soybean stubble. This is what improving the soil is about - growing crops among crop residue and improving the soil's health through the planting of tillage radishes.

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MEMORIES

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for recommending and sponsoring me.

I have been blessed in my position to enjoy many unique opportunities. Some examples include working on the Public Service Announcements with Charlie Pride as well as our daughter Holly promoting the "Backyard Conservation" campaign. Whew – I could have pages and pages of events and/or challenges Jeannine May and I got ourselves into...some of those would be best left off the pages of print. We were known as "Click and Clack of Conservation" - an honor I'm proud of. Another honor was the district letting me work a flexible schedule so I could work on and, thanks to Interstate Publishers, publish an "Environmental Science" book that is still be used by Jackson Public Schools to this day. The "Conserve Mississippi" campaign when all three partners, Districts, Soil Conservation Service and MS Soil and Water Conservation Commission worked to get the word out about conservation... thanks Jeff Wilson, MSWCC for your commitment as well as always being behind the scenes supporting the Hinds County SWCD. Jeannine May and I serving as the first counselors for the MS Soil and Water Youth Camp at Mississippi State University – I'll never forget being in the fields with the students and the thermometer read 106! What about the time that 1/3 of the students got food poisoning and we were at the hospital with them – for many it was the first time they were in the



I was blessed in my career to have some excellent mentors- one special one was Mrs. Evelyn Majure, our first Earth Team Volunteer in Hinds County.



One of the many opportunities I had in my career was to meet and visit with Charlie Pride when we worked on a Public Service Announcement with him. Pictured above is Lynn, Charlie Pride and Jeannine May.

hospital and/or away from home.

To all of the commissioners and deputy commissioners throughout the years who supported conservation education, thank you for trusting me with ideas and new events, even when they had to be refined. I'm grateful to the board who kept a check coming when I had to be put on bed rest during my pregnancy when the doctor said "Bed rest or lose the baby." I thought I would be dismissed from my job or be on leave without pay at a time when we needed funds to pay for all of the medical expenses. It was the board who said "...the office WILL find work for you to do at the house so you will not miss a paycheck." This was before there was any term for "teleworking" or working from home. I have been blessed with Christian board members who touched not only my professional life but personal...you know who you are...thank you.

Earth Team...those two words bring tears to my eyes. These individuals are the unsung heroes of the district and USDA Field Offices. It is one thing to get a pay check for what you do, but it's another thing to volunteer hundreds of hours because you believe in a cause. Mrs. Evelyn Majure was the first Earth Team Volunteer to sign up in 1985, now her daughter and son-in-law, Anna and Craig Royston are long serving Earth Team members. I will NEVER forget the Conservation Grandparent Shower the Earth Team gave for Ed and I...a treasured memory in my heart. It's the Earth Team that made the educational programs of the district a success!! zEd and I plan to stay active with the Earth Team program in Hinds County.

My children have been raised with my conservation career. They came along to assist me on many weekend events where the district was represented. I can visually see Michael's picture of him eating watermelon at the state fair exhibit when he was two years old or Holly's picture in the creek when she was two. They participated in the Conservation Carnivals, Arbor Day programs, tree giveaways, etc. A toy John Deere tractor that Michael won years ago at one of the district's annual meetings is in our grandson Cooper's room - a cherished toy to be passed down. NO words can express how much I appreciate my husband Ed "the wind beneath my wings." God blessed me when He brought Ed into my life 36 years ago. The district really received a "two for one" package when they hired me. Countless times Ed has played Sammy Soil – all of the events on Saturdays he was there playing Sammy for the opening for the MS Children's Museum and many Clinton Nature Center days. On Tree Day, he was helping me get doughnuts at 6 a.m. and staying at the office with me until the last customer left or we ran out of trees. The list goes on of his loving support...maybe the saying should be changed to "Behind every successful woman there is a supportive husband."

We all have had mentors, Mr. Earl Nail, Soil Scientist, was ONE of mine along with Mrs. Evelyn Majure and Harold and Rita Simmons. I hope I have been a small mentor to someone and made a difference in the conservation of our natural resources in Mississippi to the thousands of students as well as adults I have presented programs to.

A special thanks to ALL of my co-workers throughout the years; it was a team effort. A winning team that won numerous national awards from District of the Year throughout the nation, 1st Place National Newsletter Awards, Arbor Day, Goodyear, Take Pride in America, many MACD state awards, the list goes on. When I say co-workers, I'm including district as well as NRCS – you see,

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MEMORIES

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I always loved doing water quality studies whether it was teacher workshops or with a class of students.

I'm truly a "half-breed" – starting with SCS and working with the district and I am still on the Federal register. It was with fellow SCS'ers (NRCS) that Ed and I trained with for the 2005 Chicago Marathon – Bessie and Rebecca we did it! Bessie and I even survived the Warrior Dash – what were we thinking? ALL SCS and NRCS State and Area Conservationists have supported the district and various projects when I needed technical assistance. As many say your co-workers become your second family since you spend more hours with them then you do many in your immediate family. I consider Don, Roy, Murray, Jerry and Max the brothers I never had. YET...it was the everyday coming to work and being with co-workers throughout the years and experiencing the many different challenges and events that day-to-day work brings that I will cherish. Assisting farmers and educating children were the results, but the struggles of trying to juggle farm programs, technical services and educational events

together were accomplished because of some OUTSTANDING co-workers now and in the past... each of you have touched my life! We have had good times, bad times – but remember the great times.

Gee – I could go on and on... Earth Day events, Ladies Tours, field days, Lady Landowners, etc. There is NO way I can put 30 years into an article. I guess it is time to move on. My quote for my retirement is "You're not old until regrets take the place of your dreams." I still have a lot of dreams to fulfill. As mentioned in my retirement announcement, I have the confidence of a God-led decision. God wants us to enjoy the present and not dwell in the past or fret about the future. I will treasure my memories with the district and will rely on Him for my future. As my devotion from "Jesus Calling" said "...the path ahead, you notice that a peaceful fog has settled over it, obscuring view. You



It's the Earth Team who have been instrumental in the success of the conservation education programs. The above picture was taken at the official naming of Mississippi's state soil- Natchez Silt Loam. Picture above are Rosa Pittman, Homer Wilkes, past State Conservationist, Sarah Mercier, Sara Williams, Edith Hilderbrand, Lynn Porter, Jacqueline Cannada and Don Underwood, Director of the MS Soil and Water Conservation Commission.

can see only a few steps in front of you, so you turn your attention more fully to Me and begin to enjoy My Presence."

A special thanks to each of you for all of your work supporting environmental education and the district. I'm sure I will see you as we continue to conserve Mississippi's resources. ~Lynn



Throughout my career I have worked with wonderful individuals who truly cared about Mississippi's natural resources. The staff picture above is from 1988- from left to right – Roy King, Murray Fulton, Jerry Strong, Jo Patrick, Lynn, Max Mabry and Dale Bullock.

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Earth Team Luncheon



28 Earth Team Volunteers attended the Annual Earth Team Fall Luncheon at Peggy McKey's house in November. The annual event always has great food and fellowship.



State Earth Team Coordinator, Laura Anderson, far right, presents (left to right) presents Nancy Lau, Margie Sasser and Mary Katherine Callahan with USDA appreciation tokens for their hours of service.

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Sheila Cline and
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for their set-up, art
work and talent in
the publication of
"Conservation Notes".

~Lynn

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2014 ANNUAL REPORT

HINDS COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

The Hinds County Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners and staff proudly submit the following annual report. We would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks to each of you for your continued support of the district. The district appreciates the Hinds County Board of Supervisors for appropriating funds in 2014 to the District. There are many individuals, partners, businesses and organizations that are an integral part of the district's programs and activities. Your support and assistance helps make these programs a success. To each of you THANK YOU!

This annual report covers from October 1, 2013 to September 30, 2014. The district serves all citizens of Hinds County. Services include working with farmers, landowners and land users on the plan, design and construction of conservation practices; working with homeowners on soil and drainage problems; stream bank erosion projects, conservation workshops, water quality programs, conservation education and many other conservation activities.

Some of the 2014 highlights include:

Conservation Technical Assistance Through USDA Farm Bill Programs (Federal and District Personnel Assisting)
USDA NRCS Jackson Field Office
Farm Bill EQIP Program

Applications received345
Funding requested...\$3,229,994.00
Application acres24,187
Contracts obligated.....48
Funds obligated\$533,616.00
Contracted acres3,693

APPLICANTS – Socially Disadvantage 51, Beginning Farmer 35, Limited Resource Farmer 1, Seasonal High Tunnels 19, County Resource Concerns 90, State Initiatives 75, Strike Force 73 Organic Transition 1

Outreach Program Participation by NRCS/SWCD

- Madison Co. Cattleman's Association – Murray Fulton-NRCS Program Info.
- Casey Elementary- School

2014 Financially Assisted Practices Applied

Practice	Number	Feet	Acres	Funding
Pond	8.....			\$51,704.00
Critical Area Planting.....			10.5	\$1,324.00
Fencing.....		25,906.....		\$84,091.00
Grade Stabilization Structure	3.....			\$18,278.00
Waterline.....		1,110.....		\$2,076.00
Heavy Use Protection.....	2.....			\$8,920.00
Water Trough.....	2.....			\$2,248.00
Irrigation Drip System.....	1.....			\$1,460.00
Seasonal High Tunnel	1.....			\$7,210.00
Herbaceous Weed Control.....			182.....	\$4,195.00
Total				\$181,506.00

- Garden
- Project Earth Environmental Education Workshop- June 10th-12th
- MSWCC Youth Camp- June 1th-5th
- Producer Advisory Council Mtg- Feb. 18th
- Lamb Nation "Small Ruminant Field Day" July 12
- Farm Consulting Group "Small Ruminant Field Day Sept. 20

CONSERVATION EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Conservation Poster and Essay Contests – 2014 theme was "Digging Deeper: Mysteries in the Soil." Posters and essays were submitted from students in county, city, private schools as well as home schooled. Hinds County had Area and State winners.

Poster & Essay reception honoring students who placed in the district's contests as well as sponsoring teachers; over 120 in attendance.

Project Earth Environmental Educator's Workshop – 17 educators from Central Mississippi participated

Participated in "Read Across America" – Bates and Lake Elementary Schools, Jackson Public Schools

Educational Farm Days – Trace Pathways Farms – over 1,000 students

Hillcrest Envirothon Training – 6 training sessions. The team placed in the 1st in the State Competition and competed in regionals in Illinois.

Sponsored 5 students to the Mississippi Association of Conservation District's Soil and Water Youth Camp. Camp

participant Drew Wilson, was selected as the 2014 recipient for the Youth Camp Scholarship.

Career Days at various schools

- 2014 Tree Planting Week – The Hinds County Soil and Water Conservation District with assistance from NRCS and MSWCC sponsored a successful Tree Planting Week. Twenty-three programs for 2,105 students. Each student received a pine seedling to take home and plant.
- 2014 Tree Day – individuals came by the office to obtain tree seedlings.
- Once again, the district helped coordinate the State Arbor Day observance held at the MS Museum of Natural Science – 200+ elementary students.
- 12 Summer Reading Library Programs – Sammy Soil 150+ children.
- Assisted with school gardens at: Lake, Casey and Galloway schools.
- 2 Food, Land and People Workshops held at Mississippi College – 56 college students.
- Judged science fairs for local schools as well as MS Regional Science Fair held at Jackson State University.
- National Agriculture Day – MS Forestry and Agriculture Museum.
- Numerous Sammy Soil educational programs presented to schools.
- Science Fairs, Garden/Civic Clubs, coordinated farm tours, Summer Environmental Camps, various field days, and events.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY: YOUR BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS AND STAFF

Hinds County Soil and Water Conservation District

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Arms to Farms

By Brad Mitchell, NRCS, Soil Conservationist

On September 25, 2014, Dr. Cindy Ayers hosted a field day for veterans on her farm in Hinds County. The field day was designed to teach veterans that it is possible to make a living on small acreage by thinking outside the box. Dr. Ayers has diversified Foot Print Farms by growing vegetables and livestock. She has implemented numerous conservation practices to increase her farms production potential. She has further improved on "normal" growing practices by working with the NRCS to build a high tunnel house and installing net wire fencing. The high tunnel house allows a person to grow crops earlier in the spring and later into the fall by trapping heat

inside the structure much like a window does inside a vehicle. The net wire fencing, fairly suited for small ruminants, allows a producer to broaden its capabilities of what animals can be contained on a site. Dr. Ayers has decided to raise goats at Foot Print Farms which can be an excellent source of income for people with smaller acreage by allowing more "head" to be raised than more typical livestock such as horses and cows. Over 30 veterans from 7 different states attended the field day. Brad Mitchell and Phillip Mikell, representatives of the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Hinds County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), explained the



Veterans visited Foot Print Farms in September where our NRCS/District staff shared information about the availability of USDA programs. There were over 30 participants from seven different states.

beneficial aspects of developing a good working relationship with each agency. There is a NRCS and SWCD office located in most counties across the country in which certain programs and technical assistance are available to the public.

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